



# USC Shoah Foundation

## COUNTERING ANTISEMITISM THROUGH TESTIMONY

In response to escalating antisemitic violence, USC Shoah Foundation - The Institute for Visual History and Education launched, in 2015, a dedicated, mission-aligned initiative to counter antisemitism and address gaps in the important work already being done by many organizations.

Our Countering Antisemitism Through Testimony Program challenges this global form of hatred by collecting, curating, and disseminating contemporary personal stories of antisemitism's deadly consequences. The program engages audiences to develop their understanding of antisemitism as a threat to Jewish people, a threat to civil society, and one of several facets of hatred that threaten all of humanity.

Through testimony collection and targeted outreach, audiences of decision-makers, global organizations, scholars, educators and communities learn of the impact of antisemitism and develop methods and actions to combat the threat and support existing efforts.

### TESTIMONY COLLECTION

The Institute has collected nearly 60 testimonies from 7 countries — Belgium, Denmark, France, Hungary, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States.

From victims of antisemitism, to eyewitnesses of violent events, to those who altered their beliefs and attitudes over time, including a former Neo-Nazi, — the interviews reflect a variety of geographies and perspectives. There are also interviews with scholars and with survivors of the Holocaust, taken twenty years after their initial testimony in USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive.

- Every interview provides a personal perspective of antisemitism, from its often-subtle beginnings to its most violent consequences.
- These testimonies, whether individual or taken collectively, paint a picture of hatred and connect antisemitism with other forms of prejudice.
- The testimonies open pathways for easier identification, less resistance to the topic, more opportunities to connect with universal themes of discrimination, and newfound opportunities for action and impact.

The program is intentionally designed to center on evidence-based decision making. The aim is to keep story at the heart of the program, maintaining focus on countering antisemitism while situating it as one form of hatred. The method creates a complete and comprehensive picture of events, experiences, and personal perspectives — approaching this challenging time with dimension and humanity.

### IMPACT THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Establishing partnerships with organizations is essential to amplify the messages of countering hatred found in the testimonies and to ensure relevance in local contexts. The immediacy, urgency, information and emotion in the testimonies in

this special collection, and within USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, can help propel organizations forward in their own programs to counter antisemitism.

Political leaders and policy makers, organizations and the media, and university administrators and student leaders, each have a critical role to play in reducing hatred and mitigating the effects of antisemitism.

In order to reach these decision makers, the Institute adopts a global outreach approach in establishing relationships with media companies, governmental entities, and multilateral organizations, as well as university student government leadership in the United States.

Organizations provide opportunities to work with their leadership and support their capacity for influence, and they provide access to a broad base of constituents and additional decision makers.

In the United States, the Institute has piloted the Intercollegiate Diversity Congress (IDC), which brought together 42 leaders representing 570,000+ students across 23 campuses. IDC is an innovative initiative for undergraduate student government leaders on U.S. college campuses. This initiative, includes a partnership with the National Campus Leadership Council (NCLC) to provide training to university student leadership and tools to address antisemitism and other forms of hatred that jeopardize inclusive campuses. It also includes the integration of testimony-based education within NCLC's own programs and training offered to the national network of university student body presidents in the U.S.

The Institute's Countering Antisemitism Through Testimony program also involves sharing the pointed and powerful messages conveyed in these testimonies with policy makers in international, multilateral organizations to help them meet their own outcomes. Examples include UNESCO, the United Nations and the European Commission, as detailed below.

- June 1, 2018 – Through USC Shoah Foundation's UNESCO Chair in Genocide Education, UNESCO utilized a specially developed testimony compilation [Testimony Speaks: Countering Antisemitism](#) to launch their policy guide "Addressing anti-Semitism through Education – Guidelines for Policymakers."
- Sept. 26, 2018 – At the [73rd Session of the United Nations General Assembly](#), a film by USC Shoah Foundation featuring video testimonies on current antisemitism opened a high-level panel organized by UNESCO titled, "The Power of Education for Countering Racism and Discrimination: The Case of Anti-Semitism."
- Dec. 7, 2018 – USC Shoah Foundation played a major role at a United Nations special event marking the [70th anniversary of the adoption of the international law that defined genocide](#) and held perpetrators accountable in the aftermath of the Holocaust.
- Dec. 10, 2018 – USC Shoah Foundation's [testimony was presented in Brussels](#) by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights, where their survey results were announced and reveal that antisemitism pervades everyday life. Witnesses to current antisemitic violence humanize this important data.

Our aspiration is to continue these and other initiatives to collaborate to counter antisemitism through testimony, which UNESCO Director-General Audrey Azoulay noted on June 1, 2018 would absolutely require united efforts: "The struggle against anti-Semitism cannot be undertaken by Jewish communities alone. Fighting it means defending human rights and liberties, because racism and anti-Semitism are one and the same in that they share hate of otherness."

View videos shared in this joint launch and awareness initiative:

[Video Presentation at the European Commission's Agency for Fundamental Rights](#)

[Testimony Speaks: Countering Antisemitism, screened at UNESCO](#)

[Countering Antisemitism Through Testimony: Video Presentation for United Nations](#)

More information at [sfi.usc.edu/antisemitism](https://sfi.usc.edu/antisemitism)